

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Spain

SUBJECT Proceedings of a Meeting Called by the Spanish Republican President in the Attempt to Form a New Government

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SUPPLEMENT

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1. At a meeting of the various Spanish political parties and trade-union organizations called by Diego Martinez Barrio, President of the Republic in Paris on 8 August 1947, there were present the President of the Republic, who presided over the session, and representatives of the following parties: the Union Republicana, the Izquierda Republicana (both factions), the Partido Federal, the Spanish Communist Party, the PSUC (Catalan Communist party), the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, the Socialist Party (Negrin faction), the Basque Nationalist Party, and the CNT, represented by Luque. The President of the Republic read a letter from the President of the Socialist Party, Enrique de Francisco, in which in friendly terms he informed the President that his constituents would not attend the meeting. The reason which they had given privately to Martinez Barrio for their absence was that what they termed the dissident faction of their party had also been invited. Trifon Gomez in a private meeting, gave the same reason in the name of the Prieto sector of the UGT for declining to attend, saying that that group would have come if the dissident faction of the UGT had not been invited.
2. At the seven-hour meeting, Martinez Barrio said that, after having discussed the problems of the Government separately with the various groups, he found himself in a situation where the Socialists, the UGT and the CNT had voluntarily seceded from the Government, and from republican institutions. The remaining groups had expressed themselves thus: The straight Republicans advocated a government formed by the Republican parties alone, without Socialists, Communists or trade unionists. The Negrin Socialists and the Communists sought a government of the broadest possible representation. Martinez Barrio, not presuming to make the decision alone, and desiring that whatever course he chose should have wide support, asked that all the parties get together at this meeting and work out a formula for the solution of the problem. If a formula could not be agreed upon, he hoped that the solution which he finally chose - whether it were that of the Republicans or that of the Negrin Socialists and the Communists - would not be opposed by those who had advocated the other course. It was accepted as a foregone conclusion that the Socialist Party, the UGT and the CNT would not form a part of the government and would follow Prieto.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

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3. The object of the meeting having been explained, the President of the Republic left. Antonio Velao (Secretary General of "Espana Combatiente"), as the oldest man present, was chosen to preside and the discussion began. Manuel Torres Campana suggested that a committee be formed to draw up a proposal. Angel Galarza asked that before the committee took action, each party explain its position, so that they could see if it were possible to reach a formula. Each party proceeded to give an account of what it would propose.
4. Josep Tarradellas, as spokesman for the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, read the report which that party had drawn up, expressing loyalty to the republican institutions and containing suggestions to the President of the Republic for resolution of the crisis. He made an effusive declaration of devotion and defense of republican institutions, but declared that the meeting itself was improper and irregular. Tarradellas criticized the President of the Republic, bringing up the fact that the Esquerra had asked the President to call a meeting of the parties during the Giral Government, to seek agreement at that time, and he ended by saying that this meeting was considered useless and uncalled-for, and that Esquerra would not form part of the committee.
5. Luque, speaking for the CNT, explained the background of the formation of the ANFD. He said that the Cenetistas believed there had been a constituent period since 18 July 1936 and the uprising of Franco, that the republican institutions had lapsed, and that a plebiscite was the only solution. His statements produced a violent incident with the Communists. He remained calm and stayed at the meeting until the end, saying at its close that the CNT did not agree with the accords adopted.
6. The entire discussion which followed was a struggle between the Union Republicana, the Izquierda Republicana, and the Partido Federal on one hand, and the Negrin Socialists, the Republicans of "Espana Combatiente" and the Communists on the other. The first group tried to convince the other that they should accept a Republican government and support it although they could not be represented in it. The latter group tried to persuade the former to join a government of the widest possible representation. Various formulas were discussed, including one drawn up by Tarradellas, although he had said that he did not wish to join the committee or to accept its motions; he favored forming a government of broad anti-franquist representation, a plan which was not accepted because the Communists and Negrin Republicans received it apathetically.
7. The plan adopted, with a veto by the CNT, abstention by the Esquerra and reservations on the part of the Basques, was an agreement signed by the remaining groups, expressing in a somewhat vague fashion the desire to form a broadly representative anti-Franco republican government, with a statement by the Union Republicana, the Izquierda Republicana and the Partido Federal to the effect that even though they would have preferred a purely Republican government, in the interests of peace they would agree to a coalition respecting the wishes of the President of the Republic.
8. The representatives of the Basque Nationalist Party and of the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya in order to go on record, gave the President of the meeting the following notes, to be transmitted to the President of the Republic: "The representatives of the Basque Nationalist Party attended the meeting in deference to the President of the Republic and to the others who were called, but they were not authorized to enter into the discussions nor to agree to any motion. They remained present in a non-participant capacity, merely to listen." The Catalan note was as follows: "Sr. Ferrer as representative of the minority of the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya and Sr. Tarradellas, Secretary General of the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, declare that as it has not been possible for the Basque Nationalist Party to take a political position, they have agreed to abstain from voting on the resolutions which have been adopted."

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